## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) An aluminum nitride ceramic base material exhibiting a small degree of warp after heat treatment and comprising main constituent elements and sintering agents comprising constituent elements, formed by governing ~~the balance of the~~ movement of ~~the~~ molten ~~constituents of the~~ sintering agents on the surface of the aluminum nitride ceramic base material~~formed body~~, the aluminum nitride ceramic base material satisfying the following formula:

$a/b \leqq 1.3$,

where a: the larger of c1 and c2,

b: the smaller of c1 and c2,

c1: the ratio "k" at a main-surface side,

c2: the ratio "k" at the other main-surface side,

$k = s/m$,

s: the fluorescent X-ray detected strength of the constituent elements of the sintering agents,

m: the fluorescent X-ray detected strength of the main-constituent elements.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Currently Amended) An aluminum nitride ceramic base material as defined in claim 1, wherein ~~the~~ formed bodies are charged into a sintering furnace with a setter made of a permeable material that is nonreactive with the constituents of the sintered body ~~bodies~~ under

sintering conditions and free from softening and deformation in order to govern the balance of movement of the molten constituents of the sintering agents.

5. (Currently Amended) An aluminum nitride ceramic base material as defined in claim 1, wherein ~~the flow rate of the~~ atmospheric gas is introduced into ~~in~~ a sintering furnace at a flow rate which is reduced at or above a ~~the~~ melting point of the sintering agents in order to govern ~~the balance of the~~ movement of ~~the~~ molten ~~constituents of the~~ sintering agents.